Washington State
Web Presentation Guidelines for Digital Government
VERSION 4.0

Purpose

State agencies are working together to realize the vision of digital government in Washington State. This enterprise approach harnesses statewide best practices for providing Web-based content and services. The Web Presentation Guidelines (WPG) are a tool to help achieve citizen-centric digital government services and information.

The WPG 4.0 function as both a business and technical tool to help deliver government services online. They provide a roadmap for business managers, Web developers, content creators, designers, and more. For the constituent, the WPG enable a common look and feel, ease of use, and convenience. For an agency business program and/or Web developer they reduce risk, speed time-to-market, and eliminate redundancies.

The WPG 4.0 represents best practices and guidelines that have been developed and recommended from a multi-agency perspective. Since the Spring of 2000, more than 20 state agencies have participated in the creation and evolution of the guidelines.

Objectives

These guidelines are designed to provide direction for the delivery of interagency and public Web-based information and services. They will be reviewed on a continued basis by the Department of Information Services (DIS) in coordination with the Customer Advisory Board (CAB) to assess impacts of changes in technology and capabilities.

The guidelines are organized alphabetically to help you quickly locate a specific topic. A To-Do Quick List is provided with each topic. For convenience, a WPG Checklist for all topics is also available to view online or download.

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Accessibility

Action: Create accessible Web sites and Web-based applications by following the accessibility guidelines within the Access Washington Styleguide.

What: The Access Washington Styleguide for Accessibility provides easy-to-follow steps to make accessible Web content and applications. The Styleguide encourages developers to use the World Wide Web Consortium's (W3C) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0 (WCAG) Priority Checklist to evaluate and maintain the accessibility of agency Web pages and Web-based applications.

Many of the WCAG Checklist of Checkpoints for Web Content Accessibility are incorporated into Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, which establishes accessibility standards for federal agencies.

To comply with the intent of the Web Presentation Guidelines for Accessibility, agencies should:

- Satisfy all Priority 1 WCAG checkpoints.
- Implement Priority 2 and 3 checkpoints as needed, especially if the Web site uses tables, frames, or form controls.
- Create a logical tab order for navigation.
- Test and modify as needed with an accessibility evaluation and repair tool.

Why: The state of Washington is committed to providing access to Web-based information and services to the public and employees, including individuals with disabilities.

Tools/Web Links/Templates: Accessibility Tools and Training

Various types of development, evaluation and repair tools are available to help create accessible Web sites and Web applications. A combination of tools may be useful. Accessibility training is also recommended.

• W3C list of Evaluation and Repair tools.	Large selection of 3rd party products and solutions.
• A-Prompt Tool-kit	Evaluation and repair tool
• The Wave	Evaluation tool
• Vischeck	Colorblindness information and evaluation tool
• MAGpie	Synchronized text generator for multimedia files
• Dreamweaver by Macromedia	Development, validation tools and training

- [Washington Assistive Technology Alliance](#)   Information and training

- [508 Universe](#)   Online training

- [Curriculum for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#)   Training available online or in a downloadable format.

To-Do Quick List: Accessibility

a.	Use the Access Washington Styleguide for Accessibility to create Accessible Web sites and Web-based applications.
b.	Satisfy all Priority 1 WCAG checkpoints.
c.	Implement Priority 2 and 3 checkpoints as needed, especially if your Web site incorporates tables, frames, or form controls.
d.	Create a logical tab order for navigation.
e.	Test and make modifications as needed with an accessibility evaluation and repair tool.
f.	Acquire additional accessibility training as needed.

Browser Compatibility

Action: Design to support the predominant types and versions of browsers while following the [state Internet standards for Hypertext Markup Language (HTML).](#)

What: Browsers run on a variety of platforms such as Microsoft Windows, Macintosh, Unix/Linux, and other operating systems. A number of browsers are available to the public and multiple versions exist within each browser. Microsoft Internet Explorer is the predominant browser and Netscape is used by a fair percentage of individuals, while other browser types exist such as AOL, Opera, Lynx and more.

Design for your intended audience and test for multiple browsers, various operating systems, and for backward compatibility as needed. Use Web server logs to identify browser and platform trends.

Some applications may require a higher-level browser for security, compatibility, or functional purposes, depending on business needs. Identify a recommended minimum when needed and provide a Web link to the free browser upgrade and any necessary plug-ins.

Why: Designing for multiple types of browsers while following the state's Internet standards for HTML provides the ability to deliver Web-based information and services to the widest possible audience.

Tools/Web Links/Templates: HTML AND Browser Compatibility Resources

- The Complete HTML 4.01 Reference   HTML 4.01 Tags and IE and Netscape Compatibility

- HTML Validator   W3C HTML Validation Service

- HTML TIDY   HTML Utility to Review Code

- Browser Compatibility Chart   Outlines key features for multi-browsers and operating platforms

- Webmonkey Reference Chart   Lists features supported by browsers and platforms

- Web Design Compatibility   Information on browser compatibility and testing

To-Do Quick List: Browser Compatibility

a.	Design to support the predominant types and versions of browsers while following the state Internet standards for Hypertext Markup Language (HTML).
b.	Design for your intended audience and test for multi-browser, various operating systems, and backward compatibility as needed. Use Web server logs to identify browser and platform trends.
c.	Identify a recommended minimum for higher-level applications, and provide a Web link to the free browser upgrade and any necessary plug-ins.

Common Look and Feel

Action: Provide a common look and feel for Web information and services.

What: Guidelines are provided below to achieve the common look and feel for Washington web-based services. These guidelines will be reviewed and are planned for update on an annual basis.

	Top Level Presentation - The main home page for a state agency or organization. These pages are essentially indexes with hyperlinks to pages within a web site.	*Mid Level Presentation - Second-to-third-tier pages that may include home pages for programs within an agency and/or smaller divisions, or cover a specific topic area.*	*Page Level Presentation - These pages contain substantive information, such as reports, publications, executive summaries, etc. i.e., the "meat and potatoes" of a web site or application.*
Clickable Access Washington logo at the top left of page	X	X	X
Blue graphic banner down left side	**Wide**	**Wide**	**Narrow**
2 or 3 column page (navigation buttons on left, text in middle, logos or quick links on right)	X	X	
Black text with blue headings	X	X	X
Agency identifying banner at top of page	X		
Clickable agency logo in a consistent location if used	X	X	X

- *Use The Access Washington Styleguide.* The styleguide makes it easier to create web pages because the basic template code is already developed to copy, paste, and edit. The guide also includes information about HTML markup review, development tools, and general Web development suggestions. Also reference agency specific guidelines.

- *Use Access Washington.* Create a single point of entry for the general public and businesses through Access Washington using a common look and feel.

- *Use a common approach for support of Web-based services.* Provide web-based self-help, email feedback, and phone-based feedback for users.

Why:

"…form and function matter. The individual agency Web sites and transactions should share a common look and feel, so a visitor who has learned how to navigate one agency's Web site knows how to navigate them all." - Gov. Gary Locke (e-Commerce Update Winter Edition 2001)

Tools/Web Links/Templates: Common Look & Feel

- Access Washington Styleguide   Download common look and feel templates

- Access Washington URL Submission Form   Add your agency link to Access Washington

To-Do Quick List: Common Look & Feel

a.	Provide a common look and feel for Web information and services.
b.	Use the Access Washington Styleguide and templates.
c.	Follow Web Presentation Guidelines for Top, Mid, and Page level presentation.
d.	Use the Access Washington Web portal as a single point of entry.
e.	Use a common approach for support of Web-based services.

Copyright

Action: Use the copyright symbol and statement at the bottom of each page in your site. Specific examples are located in the Access Washington Styleguide.

What: A copyright protects works of expression the moment they are created. The works can include Web pages, source code, object code, user interface, displays, text, scripts, graphics, video and data. For Web sites, determine the works of expression that are protected under copyright law and whether the agency is the owner of the copyright in the works. The copyright notice consists of the copyright symbol © or term "Copyright," the year of the copyright, and the

name of the copyright holder. Because of different HTML standards and browser specifications, include both the term and symbol in the copyright notice.

Why: A copyright notice is an identifier placed on works of expression to inform the world of copyright ownership. While a copyright notice is optional, it is highly recommended that it be used and placed on every page.

Even though an agency may claim copyright in an expression, it is still a public record and may be subject to disclosure under the Open Public Records Act, chapter 42 RCW. Consult an agency Public Records Officer for guidance.

Tools/Web Links/Templates:

- Access Washington Styleguide   Examples of copyright statements.

To-Do Quick List: Copyright

a.	Include the copyright symbol and statement at the bottom of each page.
b.	Include the copyright as an element of a footer or cascading style sheet.
c.	Page content is copyrighted, whether stated or not.
d.	Copyright works are still public record and may be subject to disclosure under the Open Public Records Act.

Hyperlinks

Action: Use informative hyperlinks that clearly direct users to their intended destination.

What: Link text should inform the user of the intended destination. The text should be self-explanatory, brief and meaningful. Avoid terms like "click here." Consider using the title of the site you are linking to, or another phrase that tells people where the link will take them.

Why: Informative hyperlinks provides the user a clear, descriptive path to the information and services available on the Web site.

Tools/Web Links/Templates: Hyperlinks

- W3C Conformance and Quality Assurance   Examples of meaningful link text

To-Do Quick List: Hyperlinks

a.	Link text should inform the user of the intended destination.
b.	Avoid terms like "click here."

Image Design Considerations

Action: Optimize images for fast download, when displayed, print, and accessibility.

What/How: Image optimization is comprised of several components:

Type of Image
Web images are typically JPEG (JPG) or GIF file types. JPEGs are best suited for displaying images, such as photographs, that contain many slight variations in colors. GIFs are best suited for images with large areas of flat color, such as clip art or icons. Both image types can be optimized.

Find an appropriate balance between low-resolution images (for faster loading pages) and high-resolution images (with slower loading pages). Consider the user's modem speed when determining the best resolution. A Web page with multiple high-resolution graphics may take too long for the viewer to download, causing them to look elsewhere for information.

Size of the Image
The larger the image the longer it will take to load. Consider whether a large image is worth the viewer's time to download. An image that is 100 pixels high by 100 pixels wide is actually four times the size of a 50 X 50 image, and will take four times as long to load.

Recurring Images
Whenever possible, reuse graphic images throughout the Web site. Most browsers are set to first look for a file in the computer's cache before attempting to download it again. If it finds it in the cache, no additional download is necessary, saving a great deal of time. Recurring images include page banners, navigational icons, and agency logos.

Computer Monitor Display Setting
Design for monitor display of 800x600 pixels. Images that are intended for on screen viewing, such as e-mail and web sites, should be no more than 800x600 pixels in size. A generally accepted standard for e-mail image size is about 400 pixels wide.

Monitor Resolution
Monitor resolution determines the display size of an image. A monitor's resolution is fixed at either 72 ppi for a PC, or 96 ppi for a Mac. It cannot be changed by the user.

Image Resolution
Use an image resolution that matches the typical monitor resolution for online display.

Image files fall into three general quality categories:
- High resolution - for photo quality p rint output
- Medium resolution - for desktop printing and full screen viewing
- Low resolution - for e-mail and Web site use

Accessibility
Provide a text equivalent for every non-text element by using the ALT tag. Follow the accessibility guidelines within the Access Washington Styleguide to create accessible Web sites and Web-based applications.

Why: Web images help to improve readability and reinforce the overall message of a site. Distracting or slow loading images may have the opposite effect. Use images appropriately for maximum impact.

Tools/Web Links/Templates: Image Design Considerations

- [A Word on Graphic Image Resolution](#)   Graphic image resolution tips from IEEE

- [Compression & Optimization Tips](#)   Tutorials and tips for image compression and Web page optimization.

- [Computer Images](#)   Information on bitmap and vector graphics

- [Compress Your Images](#)   How to compress an image

- [The Access Washington Styleguide](#)   Accessibility guidelines

To-Do Quick List: Image Design Considerations

a.	Optimize images.
b.	Minimize download time.
c.	Review best practices for image resolution.
d.	Design for monitor display setting of 800x600 pixels.
e.	Use ALT tags for Accessibility - Review Accessibility Styleguide.

Intended Use/External Content Policy Guidelines

Action: Include a statement of policy regarding the purpose of the Web site, the conditions under which the agency will place or allow "external content," and the process the agency will use to monitor external content.

What: Include a purpose statement with an assertion that the agency Web site is not intended as a public forum. Model External Content Guidelines are available to serve as a template for such a policy statement. Review and modify it as necessary to reflect individual agency purpose, authority and business.

Review proposed changes with the Office of the Attorney General if significant modifications are made to the template language.

Why: Agency Web sites are not intended be open public forums. External content on pages operated by the state will be permitted at the sole discretion of the agencies.

Tools/Web Links/Templates: Intended Use/External Content Policy Guidelines

- Model External Content Guidelines   This model is provided for use by government agencies that operate a Web site that contains links to other Web sites outside the agency's control.

- Governor's Intended Use policy   Policy applicable to pages that are developed and maintained by the Office of the Governor

- Access Washington External Content   Policy applicable to Access Washington and other DIS Internet Properties

To-Do Quick List: Intended Use/External Content Policy Guidelines

a.	Include a statement of policy regarding the purpose of its Web site.
b.	Include the conditions under which the agency will place or allow "external content" on its Web site.
c.	Include the process the agency will use to monitor the external content allowed.
d.	Agencies proposing to significantly modify template language may wish to review proposed changes with the Office of the Attorney General.

Meta tags

Action: Use meta tags to help Find-It! Washington and Ask George, the state's two comprehensive search engines, locate content on state agency Web pages.

What: A standard set of meta tags has been developed for Washington state government Web pages. The Content Indexing Standard represents the fourteen-field Washington Government Information Locator Service (WAGILS) set established by the State Library Commission.

Use the full set whenever possible. At a minimum, include the title, description, keyword, and originator fields of the WAGILS Meta tag set. Text in the description tag is what will appear in the Ask George search results. In addition to meta tags, use unique and descriptive Web page titles for each page. Incorporate combinations of words or acronyms that people may likely use when searching for information on a specific page. For example: Washington State Department of Licensing Home - DOL would capture search terms DOL Home page, Licensing, Department of Licensing, DOL, etc. A unique title is especially important for Ask George.

Why: Meta tags can greatly increase user chances of finding Web content through a search engine. Beyond Ask George and Find-IT!, meta tags also help many commercial search engines to better find Web sites -- especially those Web pages that otherwise lack descriptive body text. Most search engines use the Meta description tag (along with full-body text) for indexing pages.

Tools/Web Links/Templates:

- Ask George - A search tool guide
- Find-IT! Washington

To-Do Quick List: Meta Tags

a.	Use meta tags to help pages be found with search engines.
b.	Determine a naming structure for HTML page titles that includes words that people are likely to use when they search for the content of that page.
c.	Become familiar with the WAGILS content indexing standard.
d.	As a minimum use the title, description, keyword, and originator fields of the WAGILS set on each page.

Minimize User Hardware and Software Requirements

Action: Minimize processing and storage needs on the user's workstation by limiting download requirements for government Web-based services.

What/How:

- Minimize client-side code by using server-side logic. This is consistent with the Internet direction for portable logic as adopted by the Information Services Board (ISB) on 12/1999.
- Keep demands on the user's workstation to a minimum by calling for plug-ins with minimal requirements.
- When downloaded plug-ins are required to view a site, clearly demonstrate how and where to obtain the plug-in. Alert the user to workstation requirements.
- Use plug-ins that are available to the user for no charge.

Why: Excessive use of client-side processing can place high demand on a user's workstation. Excessive processing may limit access to Web-base services. Minimized client-side code provides user convenience and reduces issues with backwards compatibility.

To-Do Quick List: Minimize user hardware and software requirements

a.	Minimize client-side code by using sever-side logic.
b.	Keep demands on the user's workstation to minimum.
c.	Clearly demonstrate how and where to obtain the plug-in.
d.	Use plug-ins that are available to the user for no charge.

Navigation

Action: Design Web sites so that they are easy to navigate using a function or task based approach.

What: By using a task (function) based approach to information and services, successful navigation will not require understanding of an organization's internal structure. Consistent navigational screens will continually reinforce site organization and information hierarchy.

- Use a task driven approach to navigation
    - o Provide the user an easy way to accomplish their goal or to complete their task by using a navigation path.
    - o Use multiple navigation paths (i.e. search, index, menus, etc.) .depending on how different users may try to access information
    - o Use intuitive, task (function) based links, like "Start a Business" or "Find a Job."
- Provide a topical index, graphical site map and/or internal site search function
- Use navigation elements consistently
    - o Provide links or navigation buttons on all pages back to the home page that are easily identified.

- o Place primary and important links on every page, in the same location, and in the same sequence.
- o For information located down two or three scrolls, use jump links and anchor tags to link to the information from the top of the page.
- Use the page title tag to provide a meaningful description of content (i.e. Title of page - Department Name)
- Provide different methods of navigation. The browser back button should be an option for navigation, not the exclusive method
- Perform navigation testing with external users using the site
- Ensure that the navigation scheme works for specified audiences through usability testing. See Usability for additional information

Why: A successful site navigation scheme will allow a user to interact with a Web site, finding desired content with minimal effort.

Tools/Web Links/Templates: Navigation

- Web Presentation Guidelines for Usability

To-Do Quick List: Navigation

a.	Design Web sites so that they are easy to navigate using a task (function) based approach.
b.	Provide a topical index, graphical site map and/or internal site search function.
c.	Provide links or navigation buttons back to the home.
d.	Use the page title tag to provide a meaningful description of content.
e.	Provide different methods of navigation.
f.	Perform navigation testing with external consumers using the site.
g.	Ensure the navigation scheme works for specified audiences.

PDF

Topic: Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF)

Action: Optimize Adobe PDF files for online viewing.

What: The Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) is commonly used for electronic document distribution. The Adobe Acrobat product is required to create

a PDF document while the Adobe Acrobat Reader is necessary for the user to download and install as a plug-in.

Consider the following for distributing large PDFs via the Web:

- Reduce the size of PDFs. A number of options are available from Adobe to reduce the size of a PDF including:
  - o Compress text and line art
  - o Lower dpi settings for images
  - o Lower quality setting to minimum
  - o Remove fonts from "always embed" list
  - o Split document into smaller files
  - o Remove extra pages
  - o Remove embedded tags
  - o Optimize for page-at-a-time viewing.

- Configure server software to support page-at-a-time functionality. Information is generally available from server software manufacturer.

- Configure PDF files for page-at-a-time downloading and viewing "Byte serving" or "Fast Web View" for large files

Why: A PDF preserves all formatting, graphics, fonts, and color of any source document. As such, a file converted to PDF may become too large to download via a slow Internet connection.

Tools/Web Links/Templates: PDF

- [Tips for Distributing PDFs on the Web](#)   Optimize PDFs from Adobe

- [Reducing the size of PDFs](#)   Includes a number of suggestions to increase viewing speed

- [Troubleshooting Byteserving](#)   Adobe Technical Guide

To-Do Quick List: PDF

a.	Optimize Adobe PDF files for online viewing.
b.	Reduce the size of the PDF when necessary.
c.	Consider using page-at-a-time downloading and viewing with "Byte serving" or "Fast Web View" for large files.

Performance

Action: Design pages that load within 10 seconds and allow the user to access information quickly.

What: Web performance is most commonly interpreted as the time it takes a page to load for the user. The most important issue in response time is providing the user a screen of useful information. If the user can start acting on some information quickly, it doesn't matter as much if the full page takes longer to load.

Consider the following components that affect response time:
- Throughput of the Web server
- The Web server's connection to the Internet
- The Internet itself
- The user's connection to the Internet
- The rendering speed of the user's browser and computer

Why: Research on response time has shown that pages need to be delivered to users in 10 seconds or less. Staying below the 10 second limit is required for users to keep their attention on the task. Response times over 10 seconds produces higher bailout rates (the proportion of users who do not wait for the full download).

To-Do Quick List: Performance

a.	Limit use of graphics – use multiple occurrences of the same image instead of different images. The image file will be in the user's local cache and will render quickly.
b.	Help users predict response time in downloading large pages or multimedia files by indicating the size of the download next to the link. Sizes should be given for files that will take more than 10 seconds to download at the prevalent bandwidth available to most users.
c.	Use Multimedia effects only when they add to the user's understanding of the information.
d.	Use ALT text attributes for images so users understand what they are about before they are rendered.
e.	Include WIDTH and HEIGHT attributes on all images and tables so the browser can draw the page quickly.
f.	Make the top of the page meaningful even when no images have been downloaded.
g.	Cut down on the complexity of tables on pages.

Privacy

Action: All state agency Web sites shall incorporate an appropriate privacy policy.

What: Use a Web privacy notice to identify any information that is collected from visitors to the site and explain how that information will be used. Include a link to the appropriate privacy notice on the site home page and any web page where personal information is collected. A model privacy notice is available that addresses information collection, use, security, and access.

Why: Executive Order 00-03 – Public Records Privacy Protections
Governor Locke states, "It is state government's added responsibility to protect the personal privacy rights of Washington's citizens and lead the private sector by example and by law."

Tools/Web Links/Templates: Privacy

- Model Privacy Notice

  Each executive state agency that operates an Internet Webs site shall adopt this Model Notice

- Governor's Executive Order 00-03

  Public records privacy protections ensures that state agencies comply fully with state public disclosure and open government laws, while protecting personal information

- Public Records Privacy Protection Policy

  Information Services Board (ISB) policy for procedures and practices for the handling and disposal of public records and copies of public records

To-Do Quick List: Privacy

a.	Incorporate an appropriate privacy policy.
b.	Publish a privacy notice and safeguard personal information.
c.	Identify any information that is collected from visitors to the site and explain how that information will be used.
d.	The site home page and any Web page where personal information is collected shall include a link to the appropriate privacy notice.

Records Retention and the Web

Action: Ensure that all records on your website are covered by either a State General Schedule or an agency unique schedule.

What: Web pages and web based systems are public records. Some records may be of a transitory nature while others may be used as a means of conducting official business between agencies and its clients or customers.

Inventory and include web content on approved agency records retention schedules. Transfer web records with a historical value to the State Archives at the end of their retention periods.

Determine the value and retention of all types of records including web records. Use a team of agency records management staff, website administrators, information technology staff and the agency business community to evaluate the value of the various types of records in order to adequately establish retention periods and strategies for record keeping.

Why: RCW 40.14 requires that all state records (regardless of the media) are scheduled and approved by the State Records Committee. Scheduling records allows for their proper retention and disposal.

Tools/Web Links/Templates:

- State Archives   Records and Information Management
                                                    Publications for State and Local Government
                                                    Agencies

- General Records Retention Schedules   General schedules for state agencies

- General Records Retention Schedules   Appendix B – Web site Records

To-Do Quick List: Records Retention and the Web

a.	Contact your agency Records Officer
b.	With your agency Records Officer and Information Services staff, review the state general schedule and the records retention schedule for your office to determine if all web records are covered. Identify those that apply.
c.	With your agency Records Officer, schedule those records that are not covered by the state general schedule or your office schedule.

Test User Environment

Action: Test Web sites prior to publication to ensure that the site works properly and does what it was intended to do.

What: Proofread content, test links, check platform and browser independence, accessibility, and usability. Test the functionality, business rules, database connections, and user interfaces of dynamic Web sites.

Important Areas to Test

- **Links** - Ensure every link, button and menu choice is properly programmed.

- **Spelling and proper grammar** - Verify that content is correct and presented with tone or message that is consistent with the rest of the site.

- **Platform/Browser Independence** - Test for HTML 4.01 compliance – See Browser Compatibility Guidelines.

- **Usability** - Usability testing is oftentimes conducted at the same time as other testing. Verify navigation, ease of use, and colors. Conduct usability testing early in the development process to avoid costly overhauls. Use focus groups and prototypes to identify usability problems before coding begins.

- **Application** - Test functionality, business rules, databases, interfaces, etc. if the site contains an application.

- **Performance –** Test for page load time. Graphics, video and other files may affect the download time of the page. See Design for Performance Guidelines.

Why: Mistakes, oversights, and configuration problems erode user confidence in site content.

Tools/Web Links/Templates: Test User Environment

- [Web site Test Tools](#)   Large selection of 3rd party products and solutions.

To-Do Quick List: Test User Environment

a.	Test Web sites prior to publication.
b.	Proofread content, test links, check platform and browser independence, accessibility, and usability.
c.	Test the functionality, business rules, database connections, and user interfaces of dynamic Web sites.

Usability

Action: Design Web pages so that they are easy for the user to complete tasks.

What: A "usable" Web site is designed so that when visitors interact with it they will be able to easily and quickly find what they need, as well as complete key

tasks easily. Periodically test state agency sites with representatives from key audiences for simplicity, accessibility, ease of navigation, task completion and overall user satisfaction.

Why: The extensive diversity among users of government Web sites means a high degree of usability is critical to site success. With this in mind, present a Web site in a manner that is usable for the specified audience (or audiences).

Tools/Web Links/Templates: Usability

- Usability.gov   Methods, checklists, and resources

- Web Design Guidelines   IBM Ease of Use Group

To-Do Quick List: Usability

a.	Ensure users of the Web site can complete key tasks and find critical information easily and quickly.
b.	Periodically test state agency sites with representatives from key audiences for simplicity, accessibility, ease of navigation, task completion and overall user satisfaction.

Video Guidelines

Action: Provide Web video in multiple formats to ensure the widest coverage to users. Indicate which video format(s) are used and provide a link to the download site for the required plug-in.

What/How: Consider the following general guidelines when determining video needs.

Delivery Methods
There are two methods for sending video files on the Web. The "streaming" method requires a dedicated server and software to dynamically send the video to the viewer. This technology allows the video to play within 10 seconds of requesting the file and is more suited for longer, high quality video.

The "progressive download" method involves placing a video file on a standard Web server for users to download before viewing. This method is more suitable for short video clips of 30 seconds or less. Consult with a network administrator about the possible network strain prior to placing video files on a Web server.

Target Audience
A majority of the general public still use slower, dial-up connections and are less willing to wait for large video files to download (as with a progressive download).

If the target audience is the general public, consider using a lower speed, streaming video format to ensure proper playback and minimizing download time. If the target audience is limited to users with a T1 line or other high-speed connection, consider using higher quality video to take advantage of the additional bandwidth. If the audience consists of both dial-up and broadband customers, different video streams should be made available to meet the needs of all users.

Media Equivalents for Accessibility
Include video captioning that describes the essential speech and audio portions of the video. If this is not feasible within the video, provide an alternative auditory description to accompany the video. For additional information, refer to Accessibility Guidelines.

Special Requirements for Testing
Conduct user tests on the delivery method using targeted connection speeds and required media player(s). Also test the media player(s) links and instructions on the download site(s).

Why: Web video offers a wealth of interactive possibilities not available with other media. As the technology improves, the quality and reliability of Web video is quickly making it one of the premiere choices for communication between businesses, agencies, and the public. The target audience and nature of the video production will help determine the best technology to use.

Tools/Web Links/Templates: Video Guidelines

- Web Video FAQs

- QuickTime Player

- RealOne Player

- Microsoft Media Player

- Flash Media Player

- MAGpie Captioning Software   Authoring tool to make Web videos accessible to persons with disabilities

- Accessibility Guidelines   Access Washington Styleguide for accessibility

To-Do Quick List: Video Guidelines

a.	Research the various video formats (players, features, requirements, user info).
b.	Consult with server administrator(s) on available delivery methods and

	limitations.
c.	Review the Access Washington Styleguide for accessibility.
d.	Determine the targeted audience and connection speeds (T1, DSL, Modem).
e.	Evaluate the video requirements (format, length, quality, production, budget, timeline).
f.	Perform user testing to ensure proper playback and delivery to targeted audience.

Web Site Maintenance

Action: Review and maintain Web site content based on the timeliness and usage of information.

What/How: Most Web server software packages include monitoring tools to analyze site content and usage. An agency Web server administrator can provide statistics on Web traffic. Use these resources to make frequently accessed pages more prominent, and to modify or remove little used pages as appropriate. Consistently check for broken or outdated links to avoid frustrating site users. Use a link checker program that will spider through a site and report any broken links.

Be aware that many external entities may link to agency Web sites. Use an alternative such as a redirect page to inform users of a change when a page is renamed or removed.

Why: Web sites need to contain the current information and accurate links. By monitoring a site on a regular basis, agencies can ensure content continues to serve the needs of site users. Prompt removal or update of broken links will ensure that users maintain a high level of confidence in site material.

Tools/Web Links/Templates: Web Site Maintenance

- Alta Vista's Webmaster Search   Find pages that link to agency Web site

- Web Masters Listserv   Communicate changes that may affect other agencies

To-Do Quick List: Web Site Maintenance

a.	Review and maintain Web site content.
b.	Check for broken or outdated links.
c.	Use a redirect page when necessary.
d.	Communicate changes that may affect other agencies.

Writing for the Web

Action: Write for the Web

What: Write Web pages that focus on users and their goals for getting information. Give users what they need in as few words as possible. Break up text into short sections using headings, short straightforward sentences, lists, tables, visuals when they help and links to other useful information and resources

Why: Users are busy and want content from web sites that is quick and easy to get to and answers their questions and/or solves their task or problem. Most Web users skim pages for what they need and move on to their goal.

Tools/Web Links/Templates: Write for the Web

- Web Style Guide 2nd Edition   Web manual for editorial style

- Writing for the Web   Research on how users read on the Web and how authors should write their Web pages.

- Design of Web sites   Summarizes the basics lessons learned about Web site design

- Access Washington Styleguide   Information about HTML markup review, development tools, universal web design and other information which can simplify your Web site development

To-Do Quick List: Write for the Web

a.	Focus the Web site on users information needs.
b.	Present the information in as few of words as possible .
c.	Break text into short sections of straightforward sentences.
d.	Use meaningful headings.
e.	Use lists (bulleted and numbered).
f.	Use visuals when they help convey the information.
g.	Supply links to other useful information and resources.